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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Multi-stakeholder dialogue segment

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Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum**

Dialogue paper by local authorities***

Implementing sustainable development: proposals by local governments

1. Local governments and civic leaders are committed to playing a positive and meaningful role in the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to working to create sustainable cities and communities. Significant movement towards sustainability has occurred at the local level in those places where local governments have acted on the goals and targets outlined in Agenda 21, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) conventions, the Habitat Agenda and the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It is of vital importance to recognize and tap this great potential for accelerated implementation of sustainable development.

2. The outcomes of the Summit must recognize the importance of:

(a) Good local governance in creating sustainable communities;

(b) Urban dimension of sustainable development and the interdependence of urban and rural areas;

(c) Role of local governments in developing partnerships for sustainable development;

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** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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(d) Working with national Governments, international agencies and civil society;

(e) Opportunities to promote and encourage diversified action at the local level.

I. Future priorities and recommendations for action

Governance

3. The role of local governments in governance for sustainable development and good governance at the local level needs to be enhanced and promoted by:

(a) Further strengthening local authorities as agreed in the Habitat Agenda; empowering them to play a more effective role in local sustainable human settlements development through appropriate decentralization of responsibilities and resources and increasing local participation, in conformity with the legal framework and policies of each country;

(b) Engaging and assisting local and subnational authorities in action strategies for sustainable development and for the fulfilment of international commitments in order to build upon local sustainable development successes in the past decade;

(c) Providing international and national support for programmes and partnerships to develop the capacity of cities and local authorities and their networks to deliver more effective sustainable development outcomes.

Poverty eradication

4. The following actions are recommended:

(a) Promote local government's awareness of and active commitment to the international development targets set out in the Millennium Declaration through the organization of a worldwide millennium towns and cities campaign, in partnership with the appropriate United Nations agencies;

(b) Strengthen the capacity (both competencies and resources) of communities to ensure that urban and rural poverty is addressed through integrated local development strategies;

(c) Support local-level and community-based participatory planning processes (local Agenda 21s) which provide a voice for poor people, women and other marginalized groups and which develop viable local economies through the promotion of local production and marketing of local products and services so as to support community-based entrepreneurship and job creation.

Capacity-building

5. The following actions are recommended:

(a) Build the capacity of local government to foster good local governance and sustainable development at the local level, through demand-led international support programmes and a partnership and policy dialogue between donors and local government;

(b) National Governments should work with local governments and their associations in order to strengthen local government's capacity, competencies and resources (including local leadership development);

(c) Develop and promote city-to-city/municipal international cooperation as an effective tool for exchange of good practice, learning, development and capacity-building.

Global strategies for the future

6. The local government dialogue paper endorsed by the local government sector and submitted to the Commission acting as the preparatory committee at its second session describes progress achieved by local governments since UNCED and identifies barriers to sustainable development. The following five strategies for joint action by all spheres of government to accelerate sustainable development were identified and elaborated:

(a) Strengthen local government;

(b) Strengthen intergovernmental and intra-governmental cooperation;

(c) Foster international solidarity and cooperation;

(d) Build a new culture of sustainability;

(e) Accelerate the transition to sustainable communities and cities.

7. A local government declaration is currently under review to be endorsed by local government leaders around the world at the Summit. Building on the five strategies above, the declaration sets out key principles,

commitments from local governments, and requests to international associations of cities and local authorities, national Governments, the United Nations and the international community.

II. Partnerships for action at the local, national and international levels

8. Local governments contribute to partnerships with their unique ability to facilitate the participation of multiple local stakeholders and to implement policies and programmes which are appropriate to local contexts.

9. The following actions are recommended:

(a) Involve local governments as equal partners in action-oriented national sustainable development strategies;

(b) Involve local government as an equal partner in the United Nations system and acknowledge its unique role as a sphere of government, through the enhancement of such initiatives as the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities;

(c) Recognize and support international campaigns of local and subnational governments aimed at building healthy, sustainable and resilient communities as effective mechanisms to meet commitments of international conventions and to protect global common goods, such as:

(i) Local Agenda 21s: establish long-term national campaigns to initiate and promote local-level sustainable development participatory planning processes (such as local Agenda 21s) with mechanisms to ensure action plan implementation, such as formal linkages with annual municipal budgeting and statutory planning activities;

(ii) Local action 21s: develop specific strategies to support expanded and accelerated implementation in the over 6,000 communities which have already undertaken local Agenda 21 processes. Introduce criteria for investment programmes that consider the strategies and targets of action plans in the selection and design of projects for support;

(iii) Climate protection: support local government action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy efficiency, which will assist national Governments' efforts to meet Kyoto Protocol targets, through the implementation and expansion of the international Cities for Climate Protection Campaign;

(iv) Sustainable water use: support local government action towards integrated water resource management by launching an international programme to facilitate the creation and implementation of national and local water management plans aimed at defining, monitoring and reporting on national and local targets to eliminate overuse, pollution and water loss;

(v) Sustainable patterns of consumption and production: set up action plans for sound public procurement at all levels of government that factor into procurement decision-making, the quality of goods and services, the costs and impacts over the lifecycle of a product, and the principles of equity and sustainability. Establish national collective procurement mechanisms in order to create more effective public demand for sustainable products;

(vi) Management and prevention of disasters (natural and other): develop local management capacity to create more resilient communities and cities through delivery of training programmes in every municipality. Undertake risk analysis and management of cities to identify risk-prone buildings and infrastructure, systematically reducing their vulnerability to create more resilient living environments.

Contacts

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

Tel: +1-416-392-0273

Fax: +1-416-392-1478

E-mail: johannesburg.summit@iclei.org

World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination

Tel: +31 703066066

E-mail: s.obrien@iula.org